

Ysgol Bryn Castell



Relationships and Sexuality Education Guidelines v1.0

Written in line with Welsh Government Statutory Guidance, the RSE code and legislative summary

Person	Date	Activity
SMT	12 th July 2023	Draft policy v0.1 developed
Stakeholders including GB	From 13/07/2023 to 20/07/2023	Consultation with stakeholders on draft policy
External agencies	During Autumn term 2023	Advice sought externally following consultation
GB approved policy	Spring 2024	Final document published

Introduction

Ysgol Bryn Castell (YBC) is committed to adopting a Whole School Approach to high-quality provision of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) for all learners.

The purpose of this policy is to provide all stakeholders (learners, staff, parents/carers, governors, and external organisations) with information about the provision of RSE in our school.

High quality RSE allows for all learners to grow and develop in a safe environment to understand how to become healthy adults who are critical thinkers, whilst developing positive and healthy relationships with others. It is important that learners can explore, develop, and nurture positive attitudes towards equality, gender diversity and respectful relationships. This RSE Policy supports wider approaches to preventing violence against women, domestic abuse, and sexual violence (VAWDASV), harmful sexual behaviours, and peer-on-peer harassment and abuse.

Aims of RSE

Ysgol Bryn Castell is fully inclusive which means that we use a whole-school, strategic approach to fully include and respond to the needs of all our learners and families.

RSE has a positive and empowering role in learners' education and is vital in supporting them to realise the four purposes as part of a whole-school approach. Our RSE curriculum enables learners to form and maintain a range of relationships, all based on mutual trust and respect. This is the foundation of RSE at our school. Good quality RSE empowers learners to make responsible, well-informed decisions and be able to understand themselves and others. Our RSE Curriculum seeks to equip learners to challenge harmful stereotypes and perceptions and be able to seek help and support. Good quality RSE is positive, protective, and preventative and underpinned by a need led, rights-based approach which takes a positive view of human sexuality and relationships.

Good quality RSE should also:

- Provide accurate facts.
- Use correct biological terminology during RSE lessons.
- Promote a safe, positive, open, and honest learning culture free from stigma, shame, fear and guilt which is positively inclusive, respectful and safe for all learners.
- Promote a critical awareness of the different attitudes and values in relation to RSE.
- Empower learners to make responsible, well-informed decisions and to be able to understand themselves and others.
- Challenge harmful stereotypes and perceptions, including gender norms.
- Provide access to objective, supportive and inclusive information about growing up, body changes, healthy relationships, reproductive and sexual health.
- Provide information on where learners can access help and support services in relation to RSE.

Legislation and guidance

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is a statutory requirement in the new Curriculum for Wales framework and is mandatory for all learners from ages 3 to 16. The RSE code is issued in legislation under Section 8 of the Curriculum and Assessments (Wales) Act 2021, and clearly states the legally mandatory requirements for RSE which schools and education provisions must deliver.

Key points are:

- RSE is mandatory for all learners from ages 3 to 16 in Wales.
- Parents/carers will no longer be able to withdraw their child/young person from RSE in line with the roll out of the new curriculum.
- Using supportive guidance, schools will design their own RSE Curriculum.
- The RSE Curriculum must be developmentally appropriate for learners.
- The RSE Curriculum must include learning that develops learners' awareness and understanding of different identities, views and values and a diversity of relationships, gender and sexuality, including LGBTQ+ lives.

The RSE statutory guidance (2022) is published under Section 71 of the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021 and is designed to assist those responsible, as stated in the RSE Code, to design the RSE Curriculum for their school/education provision.

YBC complies with the legal statutory duty stated in the RSE Code from Welsh Government.

YBC recognises that people have different needs, requirements and goals and we will work actively against all forms of discrimination by promoting good relations and mutual respect within our community and between learners, parents/carers, staff, governors, and partners.

Our school policy and curriculum have been developed in line with Welsh Government statutory guidance and legislative summary and aligns with the Equality Act 2010.

Enabling Human Rights

As the world around us evolves at a rapid and significant rate, we will uphold learners' rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) to education (Article 28) which prepares them to understand others (Article 29) through an inclusive, holistic, evidence based and participative RSE Curriculum. In this way, learners develop an understanding of how rights are related to all aspects of RSE and contribute to the freedom, dignity, well-being, and safety of all people. This also helps learners to understand the importance of equity, recognising the importance of rights in ensuring fair treatment for all.

Our school also links learning to the United Nations Convention on the Rights for Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD): United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Everyone who works with children and young people at YBC will always do what is best for each learner, as part of our Whole School Approach to RSE (Article 3).

What is RSE?

RSE encompasses the knowledge, skills, dispositions, and values that will empower learners to:

- Support their health and well-being.
- Develop healthy, safe, and fulfilling relationships of all kinds, including those with family and friends, and in time, romantic and sexual relationships.
- Navigate and make sense of how relationships, sex, gender, and sexuality shape their own and other people's identities and lives.
- Understand and support their rights and those of others to enjoy equitable, safe, healthy, and fulfilling relationships throughout their lives and advocate for these.

Responsibilities for RSE

In line with a Whole-School Approach, RSE is everyone's responsibility at YBC. However, the Governing Body, Headteacher, Senior Leadership Team, and RSE Lead have specific roles to ensure the successful implementation of RSE and a safe environment for all learners.

Role of the Governing Body

The role of the Governing Body at YBC is to:

- Determine and authorise the RSE Policy, ensuring it is compliant with the Statutory Requirements outlined in the RSE Code.
- Ensure the RSE Policy is up to date and reviewed regularly.
- Ensure the RSE Policy is widely disseminated throughout the whole school community.

Role of the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team

The role of the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team at YBC is to:

- Co-ordinate the formulation of the YBC RSE Policy by involving all relevant stakeholders.
- Allocate a named member of staff to lead on RSE.
- Inform all staff and adults involved with the delivery of RSE within the school of the contents of the policy and its implications to them as providers.
- Assess the Continued Professional Development needs of school staff involved with the programme and seek to respond to these needs with suitable professional training.
- Provide support to the RSE Lead where appropriate.
- Determine and allocate funding allowance for RSE curriculum to support resources/professional training/external organisations costs.
- When the RSE Policy is reviewed, learners, teachers, governors, families, and outside agencies will be consulted to ensure it is effective and meeting statutory requirements.

Role of the RSE Lead

The role of the RSE Lead at YBC is to:

- Develop and implement a developmentally appropriate RSE Curriculum for all learners, in line with the statutory requirements outlined in the RSE Code.

- Monitor and evaluate RSE in conjunction with other staff to ensure that RSE is integrated effectively across all AoLE.
- Ensure pupil voice is reflected within the RSE Curriculum.
- Liaise with outside agencies and co-ordinate their involvement with the RSE programme.
- Liaise with parents/carers where needed regarding RSE Curriculum.
- Liaise with the Local Authority and Healthy Schools Team.
- Offer support to parents/carers in talking to their children about RSE and how to link this with what is being taught at school.
- monitor and evaluated by the RSE curriculum annually to ensure that it remains relevant, up to date and is meeting the needs of all learners.

RSE Curriculum

RSE is a broad, interdisciplinary, and complex area that includes biological, social, psychological, spiritual, ethical, and cultural dimensions.

YBC seeks to provide a high quality pluralistic RSE Curriculum which is based around the six key principles for RSE as set out in the Welsh Government RSE guidance. This provision aims to be inclusive, factually correct, and encourages learners to critically engage with the materials used. The RSE Curriculum will be taught by staff using cross-cutting themes and discreet lessons within all related Areas of Learning and Experience (AoLE), using teaching strategies and techniques which are developmentally appropriate and meet learners needs. This will also help to avoid a ‘single issue’ approach where each lesson covers a different RSE issue, isolated from other learning.

Every class throughout the school follows the same sequence of half termly themes with differentiated content:

Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Relationships	Keeping Safe	Feelings and attitudes	Me and my body	People who can help me	Lifecycles

Positive, protective, and preventative RSE

Building on the Code, the approach to RSE in our school is positive, protective, and preventative. We support learners to:

- Have access to objective, supportive and inclusive information about growing up, changing, relationships, reproductive and sexual health.
- Understand and cope with change, conflicts, and pressure.
- Recognise potentially harmful behaviours in relationships and know how to seek support.
- Have the knowledge to recognise all forms of discrimination, violence, abuse and neglect, including violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.
- Seek help and advice where appropriate.

Inclusivity; Including LGBTQ+

In line with the mandatory requirements of the RSE Code, RSE will be realised in a way that is inclusive in accordance with the principles of equality. This helps ensure that all learners can see themselves, their families, their communities, and each other reflected across the curriculum and can learn to value difference and diversity as a source of strength. This contributes to a cohesive, fair and equitable society that equips learners with skills for life. This includes gender equity and LGBTQ+ inclusivity.

Strands

RSE in the curriculum focuses on three broad strands:

- Relationships and identity: helping learners develop the skills they need to develop healthy, safe, and fulfilling relationships with others and helping them to make sense of their thoughts and feelings.
- Sexual health and well-being: helping learners to draw on factual sources regarding their sexual and reproductive health and well-being, allowing them to make informed decisions throughout their lives.
- Empowerment, safety and respect: helping to protect learners from all forms of discrimination, violence, abuse and neglect and enabling them to recognise unsafe or harmful relationships and situations, supporting them to recognise when, how and where to seek support and advice.

The Welsh Government is committed to covering the following themes in RSE: relationships; rights and equity; sex, gender and sexuality; bodies and body image; sexual health and well-being; violence; safety and support. These themes are interwoven into the above strands.

Understanding the nature of progression in RSE

The RSE Curriculum must be developmentally appropriate for learners. At YBC we will broadly follow the Phases 1, 2 and 3 approach, as outlined by the Welsh Government's Code in terms of what content is covered by each age range. This means at our school we will take account of a range of factors including the learner's age; knowledge and maturity; additional learning needs and anticipating their physiological and emotional or social development and needs during planning.

Learning within the RSE Curriculum is to be linked to the following phases:

- Phase 1: from age 3
- Phase 2: from age 7
- Phase 3: from age 11

The principles of progression across Health and Wellbeing offers guidance to progression in RSE. Our curriculum revisits content, themes and topics as outlined in the preceding phases set out in the Code, reinforcing, and building on learners' developing understanding and changing needs.

YBC seeks to provide accurate, unbiased information on RSE to learners as part of our pluralistic approach. This means that where questions of values are concerned, we provide a range of views on a given subject commonly held within society. As they develop, learners are encouraged to take increasing responsibility for their own learning.

Role of Pupil Voice in RSE

As stated in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), children and young people have the right to be consulted on decisions being made about their lives (Article 12).

To ensure the RSE Curriculum meets learners' needs and addresses emerging trends, YBC will consult learners and involve them in the curriculum content for RSE and retain flexibility to address the issues learners identify. Learners' views about what, how and where they learn will be taken into consideration so that the RSE Curriculum can truly reflect the experiences that children and young people encounter in society.

The RSE Lead will undertake regular evaluation with learners to ensure the RSE Curriculum is as robust, purposeful, responsive, and engaging as possible using creative and participatory methods to do this where possible.

Responding to Pupil Needs

YBC is fully inclusive which means that we use a whole school, strategic approach to fully include and respond to the needs of all our learners and families.

Ground rules

At YBC we endeavour to create safe and supportive learning environments. This helps to create trust and allow learners a safe space to consider learning, ask questions and express their thoughts and feelings. We aim to encourage respectful conversation, which can be achieved by developing a working agreement of ground rules with learners. This helps to maintain professional boundaries and keep learners and practitioners safe. For example, creative approaches can help learners share their questions, views, and experiences anonymously, allowing more open, honest discussion. Each class will be encouraged to develop ground rules for use within RSE sessions.

Dealing with questions

If staff are asked questions by learners during RSE lessons (which may be of a sensitive nature) they will never disclose their personal experiences. They will use their professional judgement in providing answers which are age and stage appropriate to the learner and of other learners who may be listening. There may be times when teachers feel that pupils should be advised to ask another adult, probably a parent/carer, and if this happens, teachers will try to inform parents/carers.

Distancing techniques will also be used to help learners to discuss sensitive issues and develop their decision-making skills in a 'safe' environment. Sometimes an individual learner may ask an explicit or inappropriate question. If this situation arises, the learner will be reminded of the class agreement/ ground rules. If a question feels inappropriate for a learner, or for the whole class or raises concerns, the teacher will acknowledge the question and reassure the learner that they will attend to it after the lesson on an individual basis. In this way, the learner will feel they have been treated with respect, but inappropriate personal information will not be shared with the rest of the class. Staff are fully aware of the schools safeguarding procedures.

RSE resources

YBC will use RSE resources which are relevant, reputable, developmentally appropriate, inclusive and sensitive to learners' need to support the RSE Curriculum.

In YBC the following key resources are used:

- NSPCC
- Cwm Taf Healthy School Scheme Resources
- Hafan Cymru (Spectrum Project)
- Agenda
- CRUSH
- School Beat

- ALN specific books/resources

Parents/carers are invited to view or discuss the resources the school intends to use to provide reassurance and to enable conversations, where appropriate, to be reinforced and continued in the home.

Partnerships and Engagement with Stakeholders

Working with Parents / Carers

As part of the Curriculum for Wales, RSE is mandatory for all learners aged 3 – 16. This means that parents / carers can no longer withdraw their child from RSE in line with the roll-out of the curriculum in each year group. However, YBC acknowledges that parents and carers have an important influence and role to play in terms of delivering messages about relationships and sexuality education. Parents and carers are the key people in teaching their children about sex and relationships and maintaining the culture and ethos of the family. As a result, we see RSE as a shared responsibility and seek to keep parents /carers informed about this RSE Policy, the RSE Curriculum, and resources where possible. We support parents / carers in understanding why high quality, inclusive RSE at YBC is important to the development and learning of every young person.

External partnerships

Whilst YBC is responsible for the delivery of the RSE Curriculum, we recognise the value of involving appropriate external agencies/visiting speakers to complement the RSE Curriculum. This input does not substitute or replace the school provision and delivery of RSE. If the school is approached by an unknown external agency/speaker, then advice regarding suitability will be sought.

Good practice for when working with external agencies/visiting speakers:

- Ensure that the external agency has the right skills, knowledge, and competency, and has a professional reputation for being holistic and inclusive in their approach to RSE.
- Ensure aims and learning outcomes are age appropriate for the intended learners.
- The external agency/visiting speakers have a DBS and are considered appropriate in respect of Safeguarding Procedures.
- The school have made the external agency aware of their school's policies.
- Staff will inform and prepare learners for the visit of an external agency/visiting speaker and allow them time to prepare questions prior to this.

Period Dignity

Our school fully supports the Welsh Government Period Dignity Strategy Action Plan, which aims to end the stigma and shame associated with periods.

We will support the plan by ensuring the following:

- Provision of free period products, including environmentally friendly resources, that learners can access from staff.
- A robust RSE Curriculum that covers the menstrual cycle and periods for all genders.
- A safe and suitable environment for applying/changing products.
- Provision of sanitary bins in learner toilets to support the safe and environmental disposal of products.
- Clear communication to learners and parents/carers informing them of the available free products on site, and how they can access them.

Safeguarding and Confidentiality

The RSE curriculum at YBC supports learners to be able to develop their knowledge, awareness and understanding on how to recognise discriminatory behaviours, harmful sexual behaviours, unhealthy and abusive/violent relationships, whilst ensuring that all learners develop an understanding of what consent is, including developing skills on how to give and withdraw consent.

It is important that all school staff receive the appropriate Safeguarding Training. Staff understand that they have a duty to follow the School Safeguarding Policy and Procedures at YBC, which will follow the All Wales Child Protection Procedures, if there is suspicion that a learner may have suffered or be at risk of suffering harm.

Our RSE curriculum supports learners to be able to build their knowledge and understanding of how to recognise harmful sexual behaviours, discrimination, abusive relationships, and violence and develop an understanding of consent. Learners may disclose information to school staff that cannot remain confidential.

When this occurs, our staff will follow the guidelines below:

- Remind learners that staff cannot offer unconditional confidentiality.
- Inform learners first if staff are going to break confidentiality.
- Where appropriate, encourage learners to talk about any worries and concerns they have with parents/carers.
- Ensure learners are supported adequately by an appropriate member of staff.
- Always follow the school Safeguarding Policy if there are child protection concerns.

Harmful Sexual Behaviour

Peer on peer sexual harassment taken very seriously at YBC. The whole school approach to RSE ensures that a preventative and proactive approach is adopted to tackle the issue. This includes providing learners with assurance that school staff will take every incidence of peer-on-peer sexual harassment seriously and work in partnership with the learners, parents/carers, and external agencies where appropriate to deal with any incidents.

Equality Statement

This RSE Policy aligns with the Equality Act 2010. Under the provisions of the Equality Act, schools must not unlawfully discriminate against learners based on their age, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership, or sexual orientation (collectively known as the protected characteristics). Schools must also make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantage.

Access to the Policy

This policy will be located on the school website. Parents/carers may request a paper copy from the school office.